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## *SCHOPENHAUER'S CONTACT WITH THEOLOGY*

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In lectures the charm of which his students will never forget, Dr. C. C. Everett used to speak of Schopenhauer as the most brilliant of the profound philosophers. This German thinker is perhaps little read in England, and still less in America, where the levels of culture are low, and the primitive life-instincts still fresh and strong. But among old and reflective peoples the case is bound to be different; so far as he is known at all, he is certain of a hearing—and a not unsympathetic one, whatever the final verdict. He has already ploughed deep in German thought, and his influence in France and Italy is considerable. Perhaps he is (or would be) most easily understood in India, his doctrine, in capital points, being parallel to the Buddhist philosophical writings. As we in America get further on, in age and in reflective habits, he will probably be more and more read here; and one of the crucial problems of philosophical thought may come to be, how Schopenhauer shall be disposed of.

In venturing to speak of Schopenhauer's contact with theology, I have in mind the broader use of the term, as standing for some kind of reasoned treatment of the first principles of things. What I mean is that Schopenhauer concerns himself more or less with the same fundamental questions that theology is occupied with, and that he has views which may be compared with current (or at least historical) theological teachings. One might even say that theology is one special form of philosophy rather than something to be contrasted with it,—though of course theology (or certain types of it) may accept preliminary data that philosophy (or certain types of it) would disregard. A philosophy that does not cope with the intimate and deep-lying difficulties that theology attempts to solve is hardly philosophy at all. A philosophy

may be even anti-theological, as was Nietzsche's, and none the less—or rather all the more—be comparable to theology.<sup>1</sup>

Schopenhauer's general view of the world is that of the relative idealist, but absolute realist. What is material is phenomenal, subjective, but the ultimate reality of the world is not dependent on any one's feeling or knowledge or thought for its existence.<sup>2</sup> It is will,—with which consciousness (whether its own or that of an observer) has only a passing and no necessary connection. The function of consciousness is a purely practical or pragmatic one:<sup>3</sup> it arises under certain circumstances as a guide (or light) to action, helps the will to attain the objects of its desire—that is, within limits, for any final satisfaction of the will is in the nature of the case impossible. But the will may act instinctively and unconsciously, and does so in the inorganic and lower organic worlds, and to a considerable extent even in animals and men. Occasionally, indeed, consciousness attempts something more than a pragmatic rôle; it essays to see things as they are, irrespective of their practical uses. From this disinterested curiosity and pure contemplation spring philosophy and art. But philosophy and art are rare products—only exceptional men, and those exceptionally situated, are capable of them. We all, indeed, in rare, happy moments may share in the elevation and joy they bring; but at bottom we are will, not intellect, and in the common run of our days have the fate and lot which our nature entails.

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN NATURE AND OF THE HUMAN LOT

What is it to *be* will,—not merely to see and interpret the world in the light of it (philosophy), but to be it one's self (experience—something very different from philosophy or any intellectual exercise)?

<sup>1</sup> A special reason for attending to Schopenhauer at the present moment might be said to be that thereby one is initiated into an understanding of that strange, new phenomenon in European thought, Nietzsche. It is idle to read Nietzsche without a preliminary acquaintance (and a pretty thorough one) with Schopenhauer.

<sup>2</sup> I have elaborated Schopenhauer's view of this subject in an article, "Schopenhauer's Type of Idealism," published in the *Monist*, January, 1911.

<sup>3</sup> I may be allowed to refer to my article, "Schopenhauer's Contact with Pragmatism," in the *Philosophical Review*, March, 1910.

Schopenhauer raises this question with regard to the whole world, but practically it is what will as experience means to us human beings that is in the foreground of his inquiry; here alone, indeed, can the question be answered directly, for it is only ourselves that we know at first hand; as to animals, plants, and the elements we can only reason and infer.

The question is, of course, a very personal one; it goes to the heart and marrow of us. Nor have we any assurance that the answer will be pleasant or satisfactory. Many of us would appear to be ready to do almost everything—work with our hands, travel, read books, even take up mathematical or philosophical problems—rather than think about ourselves; is it that we divine something not quite pleasing in ourselves? All the same, let us ask the question, taking for the time Schopenhauer as our guide.

Will, Schopenhauer explains, comes from want or is want—and want is of itself an unpleasant sensation. It means the absence or deprivation of something, and this is painful—so that in a sense the will, or at least willing, has its origin in pain—and actual willing is to get rid of pain. And when we get what we want, and perhaps after struggling long, the satisfaction or pleasure is momentary—we have it and then it is gone. Yes, it is principally negative, says Schopenhauer, and means little more than that we are no longer in pain; the painful wish or want no longer exists—that is about all. Plato, he says, recognized the negativeness of pleasure, making practically only two exceptions, namely, pleasant scents and the joys of the mind.<sup>4</sup> And when one want is satisfied, another arises of the same general nature, and with, sooner or later, the same passing and negative result. Indeed we seem in this way to be committed to an endless succession of wants, much as the mind, in searching for explanations, is committed to an inevitable and interminable succession of causes—and both successions, as Schopenhauer conceives them, are wearying. Or if for the moment a new want does not arise, we come to be in a more unhappy plight still, for nothing occupies us, we have a feeling of emptiness, of boredom; we might do something, and there is nothing to do—

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Republic*, ix, p. 264.

hence tedium, languor, *Langeweile*. It is a more intolerable condition than want itself, and desperate are the measures sometimes taken to escape from it. And so between these two the will oscillates; thrown now on the Scylla of want and pain, and now on the Charybdis of tedium and boredom, it does not have a happy time of it. Some of our wants become passions; they carry everything before them, perhaps clouding the reason and drowning the conscience—the sexual passions particularly. Even men of genius feel them, Schopenhauer says; they soar to the heavens, and then earthly instincts oppose and they fall back. We find Schopenhauer in his university days, with reference no doubt in part to this phenomenon, picturing life as a restless, painful conflict of reason and the eternal in us with the animal, of the few moments of bright, happy life with the oppressive hours of illusory pleasure. The sceptre of the Earth-Spirit rests heavily on men—and Schopenhauer himself felt it.<sup>5</sup> In a cooler, more objective way he later devoted a chapter to sexual love,<sup>6</sup> in which he shows how what has been said of wants in general preëminently applies to it; it begins in pain and ends in satiety—the satisfaction being chiefly in the allaying, the temporary annulling, of the desire. It accords with all this that to Schopenhauer the main reality of life (so far as the will is concerned) should be pain. This is the positive thing. Pleasant things to which we become accustomed no longer give pleasure; but painful things do not cease to be painful.<sup>7</sup> The three greatest goods—health, youth, and freedom—we are hardly aware of while we have them; not so with sickness and age. The hours go all too quickly when they are pleasant; when they are painful they go slowly enough. The pleasure that counts for much is the contrast to some previous pain; sometimes, as I have said, our pleasure is little more than relief from pain.

I have been speaking of wants and their satisfaction; but

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Volkelt, Arthur Schopenhauer (Leipzig, 3d ed., 1907), pp. 45–46.

<sup>6</sup> "Metaphysik der Geschlechtsliebe," in *Werke* (Frauenstädt ed.), vol. iii, pp. 511–523.

<sup>7</sup> *Werke*, vol. iii, p. 660; cf. p. 659, "Wir fühlen den Schmerz, aber nicht die Schmerzlosigkeit; wir fühlen die Sorge, aber nicht die Sorglosigkeit; die Furcht, aber nicht die Sicherheit." (When not otherwise indicated, the citations are from the Frauenstädt ed. of Schopenhauer's works.)

sometimes they are not satisfied—and here comes a new kind of experience. Want is pain and its satisfaction is only negative; but to be crossed, thwarted in our wants, is worse yet. And this is man's lot to a greater or less extent. With some, perhaps with many or with most, their wants are more often crossed than met. They barely live, barely maintain themselves—to say nothing of failure to experience any of the richness and fulness of life. Necessity hunts them through all their days and does not allow them the pleasures of thought and reflection. Schopenhauer evidently felt keenly the pitiable condition of what we call the masses.<sup>8</sup> He refers to negro slavery, to the operatives in factories, to the children of tender years working ten, twelve, and fourteen hours a day. This or something analogous is the fate of millions on millions. Their existence is little more than a fight for existence. And then that which they fight against—death—overtakes them at last; sometimes, though rarely, from very weariness they welcome it. Even those called successful in life, the high in station, do not always get what they want, and fear, anxiety, and trouble more or less pursue them. Crowned heads are sometimes uneasy in their minds, and the innocent and the good are liable to untoward accident and unmerited ill; how, says Schopenhauer, have the Ophelias, the Desdemonas, the Cordelias, been at fault? Moreover, though we manage to escape all the accidents and injustices that fall to the lot of so many, though we are among the few entirely happy ones, this is only for a time—sooner or later in common with the humblest laborer we too have to die, and few of us wish to.

Yes, Schopenhauer goes further. To him there is something abnormal, something contrary not only to the will, but to reason, in death; something abnormal and contrary in pain, any kind of it. Pleasure we ask no questions about, but pain—why should it be, why should it be at all? Any particle of it seems to spoil the fair plan of things. It is something incomparable—not balanceable by any amount of pleasure. The happiness of thousands, says Schopenhauer, cannot be weighed against the anguish and martyr-death of one soul. If there were a hundred

<sup>8</sup> Werke, vol. ii, p. 368; compare his reflections, when fifteen and sixteen years old, in travelling through France, as cited by J. Volkelt, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

times less suffering than there actually is, the mere existence of suffering would still damn the world. If the world is to be perfect, final (*Selbstzweck*), there must be no suffering in it—and no death.<sup>9</sup> The language may seem fantastic and exaggerated, it involves an idealism completely strange to the modern spirit; yet a deep truth may lie behind it.

But man not only wants and suffers—he acts: how does he act? What are we as acting beings in relation to one another? Schopenhauer does not question that there are disinterested people in the world, he does not doubt real morality; but to his mind they and it do not abound. He even admits that there is occasionally real badness, malice;<sup>10</sup> and the greater part of our right actions, he thinks, are due to the influence of law and public opinion. Unselfish love, spontaneous justice, that is, principle, are rare; we do not ordinarily expect them and are surprised and touched when we see them; as Hamlet says, “To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man pick’d out of ten thousand.”<sup>11</sup> The need of law and government, that is, of organized force, is partly to compel those men to be just who would not be so of themselves, and to chain the brutality that lurks in the many. Naturally men are egoistic, and even when we are faithful to the bargains we have made, we drive as hard ones as we can in the first place. This is taken for granted in the world of affairs: every one, we say, looks after his own interest; one class wants as much wages as it can get, another as much profits, another as much interest, another as much rent. Our ordinary political economy but traces the laws which self-interest follows in different situations; if man were ideally just and disinterested, this political economy would fall to pieces, its whole character as a science depends on taking self-interest as a principle. Accordingly society, particularly industrial society, is a war of interests: *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Once violence was common, with

<sup>9</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 662.

<sup>10</sup> Werke, vol. ii, pp. 393, 398; by this is meant seeking the harm and suffering of others, without expecting to gain thereby, that is, disinterestedly. Compare a psychological explanation, vol. ii, pp. 429–430.

<sup>11</sup> Werke, vol. ii, p. 191. Compare the lines of Theognis (83–86) to the effect that you could not find one shipload of really trustworthy and incorruptible men upon the face of the world.

slavery the result; and because violence ceases, we must not imagine that the war ceases. Schopenhauer points to cunning as an equally potent weapon of war, and he even thinks it is a less respectable weapon than is force.<sup>12</sup> Yet in this strife, this war, whether of individuals or of classes, we hurt one another; yes, Schopenhauer says (the full significance of the statement we shall see later), the principal source of the gravest evils that befall man is man himself: *homo homini lupus*. The rule of might instead of right which Kant held impossible even to think of as a natural law, since it would contradict itself, is really, Schopenhauer says, the actual and matter-of-fact law we see in nature—not only in the animal, but in the human world; society as it largely exists is just this self-contradictory thing, not in idea merely, but in practice. Socrates is put to death and Christ is crucified; in such acts a characteristic trait of man comes to expression. From this point of view Schopenhauer once compares the world to Dante's hell—the difference being that here man himself is the devil to his fellows; and the arch-devil Schopenhauer finds in those world-conquerors who get some hundred thousands of men lined up against one another and then call out, "Suffering and death are what you are born to, now fire away at one another with musket and cannon!" And, he says, they do it<sup>13</sup> (apparently he thinks there are some fools in the world as well as devils). Aside from this reckless, colossal egoism, there is the tame prosaic egoism of every day. Most men know, Schopenhauer observes, innumerable sufferings of others in their vicinity, but do not set about mitigating them, because this would involve some self-denial on their part. If we meet a stranger, our first thought is apt to be, "Can he be of use to us?" If not, we are not specially concerned about him. And so, on the other hand, when we ask information or counsel of another, we lose confidence if we find that he has some interest in the matter one way or the other. Self-interested creatures

<sup>12</sup> Werke, vol. ii, pp. 394–399, cf. p. 428. Compare the speech of the Athenian envoys at Lacedaemon: "Mankind resent injustice more than violence, because the one seems to be an unfair advantage taken by an equal, the other is the irresistible force of a superior" (Thucydides, i, 77).

<sup>13</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 663; cf. vol. ii, p. 383, "Woher denn anders hat Dante den Stoff zu seiner Hölle genommen, als aus dieser unserer wirklichen Welt?"



we mostly are, and the spectacle is not pleasing, and the consciousness of it (when we are capable of undeceived consciousness) not pleasing either.

For this leads to another point: we human beings, Schopenhauer holds, are much given to self-deception. We like to appear well in the eyes of others—the ordinary man is not half so much concerned about what he is as about what others think of him,<sup>14</sup> and this is the cause of many complications and much misery in the world; but (something subtler far) we like to appear well in our own eyes, and so we hide ourselves from ourselves, we cover up our real motives, we like to think there is nothing wrong about us,<sup>15</sup>—for there is nothing so unwelcome as shame. Sometimes we can stand the contempt of others—but self-contempt is intolerable and we do anything and think anything rather than allow it. And yet how pitiful this sort of a being is, a being, the theologian might say, who loves darkness rather than light because his deeds are evil!

Undoubtedly, it is not a flattering view of actual human nature which Schopenhauer gives, and it has more in common with the older theological views and with the New Testament than with the genial liberalism of our day. But because a thing is not flattering or pleasant, it does not follow that it is untrue. Schopenhauer says that in considering this graver side of things first, he parts company with ordinary moralists and takes Dante's way, which first conducted into hell. And he thinks it an educational mistake to do differently. He questions the policy of giving a pleasant picture of the world to children, of allowing them to think that rectitude and virtue are the maxims generally followed. The children will find out the truth later, he remarks, and then think none the better of their teachers; better say, giving a first example of honesty and sincerity, "The world lies in wickedness; men are not what they ought to be; but do not allow yourself to be misled, and do you be better!"

<sup>14</sup> Compare Schopenhauer's view of "ritterliche Ehre" summarized in Volkelt, *op. cit.* pp. 264-265; also of the masks (of virtue, patriotism, religion) men put on, particularly the mask of politeness—yes, sometimes even that of "Freude und Glück," *ibid.*, pp. 268-269.

<sup>15</sup> "Wir betrügen und schmeicheln Niemandem durch so feine Kuntsgriffe, als uns selbst," Werke (Grisebach ed.), vol. i, pp. 386, cf. 421; vol. iv, pp. 459 f.; vol. v, pp. 215 f.

And now, beyond all the facts I have mentioned,—which show how different experience of will is from objectively contemplating it,—is the perishableness of the things we strive for, the passingness of time and of all things in it. The pure phenomenality of the world, the dream-like character of everything in it, made a deep impression on Schopenhauer. Things are and they are not—there are few more moving expressions of this fact, outside of some of the Psalms and of Marcus Aurelius, than in the pages of Schopenhauer. It is as if his soul longed for the eternal and found it not.<sup>16</sup> The present is alone real, and in a moment it, too, with all that is in it, is gone.<sup>17</sup> Even as a boy Schopenhauer felt this. It was the basis of the contrariety in temperament between himself and his mother, tingeing his thoughts with a certain melancholy.<sup>18</sup> When in France at the age of fifteen and sixteen, he thought of the thousands of human forms long gone to decay that had traversed the amphitheatre in Nîmes, whose ruins he visited; in Toulon he pictured to himself the joyless and hopeless life of the miserable galley-slaves of the pre-revolutionary time; in Lyons he compared the unheard-of horrors of the Revolution that had only a few years before taken place there with the unconcerned business and bustle now going on at the very places of execution. “It is inconceivable,” he wrote, “how time in its might wipes out the vividest and most horrible impressions.” And in these travels we find him translating a poem of Milton’s, in which the longing to escape from the realm of time comes to expression.<sup>19</sup> For if things go, what is the use of fixing our hearts on them? “What in the next moment no more is, what completely vanishes like a dream, is never worthy serious effort,” says Schopenhauer.<sup>20</sup> He is speaking of striving and getting, we must remember—that is, from the standpoint of the will; not of will-less contemplation, philosophic or

<sup>16</sup> Compare what he says, “des Menschegeistes, der gerade weil er so vergänglich ist, das Unvergängliche zu seiner Betrachtung wählen sollte,” Werke, vol. iii, p. 505.

<sup>17</sup> The existence of the present is “ein stätes Sterben,” Werke, vol. ii, p. 367.

<sup>18</sup> Of course it was not this alone that led to the break between them; see the details in Volkelt, pp. 13–16.

<sup>19</sup> Volkelt, p. 9; cf. “Nachlass” (Grisebach ed.), vol. iv, p. 365.

<sup>20</sup> Volkelt quotes this, p. 261.

artistic, nor of true moral action, both of which do give joy, he holds, and lift us out of the changeable and the perishable altogether. But the vanity of the efforts of the will proper is more than a thought with him, it is a feeling and a conviction. We take such pains, spend such labor, he in effect says, and what is the result? The things we get are not what we expect them to be. He enlarges in particular on the deceptive nature of honor and fame, and on the illusory nature of sex-attraction; and life in general, he holds, is brighter in anticipation than in experience.<sup>21</sup> But more than this, the things do not last after we have got them. It is so of life itself. How we strive for it! 'T is the first good to most of us, we will give anything else for it—yet what is it? To the mass of men, labor, care, disappointment. Schopenhauer sees the slave, sees the factory operative, the factory child; and he thinks that sitting in the woollen mill, and doing over and over again ten, twelve, and fourteen hours a day the same mechanical tasks, is purchasing pretty dearly the privilege to breathe.<sup>22</sup> He raises the question whether the profits cover the cost.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the existence we so painfully win, we soon lose. Man alone has clearly the idea of death—and the more sensitive and thoughtful more clearly than the rest; and hence man, above all the higher man, is haunted by the fear of death. In his seventeenth year, Schopenhauer tells us (writing late in life) he was seized with the same sense of the misery of existence that came to Buddha in his youth, as he contemplated sickness, age, pain, and death.

In all this Schopenhauer thinks he has got hold of the broad permanent features of the human lot and of human character. He does not believe that man changes much or will change. He is not idealistic or Utopian as to man's future. Indeed, should all mankind's wants be met, a goal of striving be reached and Utopia be here, he questions whether a fearful *Langeweile* would not set in—yes, and whether an over-population might not eventually arise, which would start striving and want all

<sup>21</sup> See Volkelt, pp. 262–267.

<sup>22</sup> Life is "ein Geschäft, dessen Ertrag bei weitem nicht die Kosten deckt" (quoted by Volkelt, p. 245).

<sup>23</sup> "Nachlass," vol. iv, p. 350.

over again.<sup>24</sup> Even if Utopia could be endured, men would still die, so that real satisfaction on the earth would still be impossible. But there is no reason to concern ourselves with these remote possibilities. Schopenhauer thinks of man very much after all as the world has generally thought till recent years. I believe it was Sir Henry Maine who pointed out how rare had been the idea of progress in the history of humanity. It might be called an Occidental invention. Plato did not know it, nor Aristotle. Nor apparently did Christianity—at least we find Jesus once asking, “When the Son of Man cometh [that is, when the culmination of earth’s history arrives], shall he find faith on the earth?” and the coming, as ordinarily pictured in the New Testament, is not to greet something perfect that has been evolved, but to separate the bad from the good and to institute an irrevocable judgment. The idea of man’s gradually, progressively moving towards perfection is perhaps not more than two centuries old. Schopenhauer thinks it is an illusion. He has what we might call a static view of man. The generations succeed one another, but they are much the same. Man is a species much like any other—the monkey, the lion, any given tree or plant—in that it has certain constant qualities. There is no progress to more and more perfect oak-trees, or to more and more perfect lions; there is none to more and more perfect men.

By such a view as this human life is not robbed of significance, but the significance changes. Once in a while conditions are favorable and we see a perfect tree. So at rare intervals, in happy conjunctions of circumstances, we see perfect (relatively perfect) specimens of the type of man. The significance of human life is in producing these specimens—they are the flower of time; but they do not necessarily come at the end of a so-called temporal evolution, but here, there, any time, when the conditions are favorable.<sup>25</sup> Schopenhauer has in mind the men

<sup>24</sup> Werke, vol. ii, pp. 113–114.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Volkelt, pp. 3, 303, on the “aristokratischer Zug” in Schopenhauer’s philosophy and his “aristokratischindividualistische Erlösungsphilosophie.” Here, it may be noted, is the starting-point for Nietzsche’s doctrine of the Superman; he quotes (Werke, vol. ii, p. 266, “Taschenausgabe”) from Schopenhauer: “die Menschheit soll fortwährend daran arbeiten, einzelne grosse Menschen zu erzeugen—und dies und nicht Anderes sonst ist ihre Aufgabe.”

of philosophical and artistic genius, and the holy men or saints, of whom presently. The point now is that Schopenhauer expects no change in the general constitution of human affairs. If he would still recognize in some sense "a far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves," it is not an earthly one. Individuals (aside from a crisis which may be compared to conversion) do not radically change; their actions may, more or less, but not the principles of their character.<sup>26</sup> Changes are in knowledge, not in will; bad men can no more be turned into good than lead into gold, the egoism of a given person no more be reasoned or persuaded out of him than the cat can lose its instinct to catch a mouse. Schopenhauer thinks it childish to believe that men's characters can be changed by presenting to them rational ideas, by begging, imploring, and so on;<sup>27</sup> intelligence may be increased, that is all. So society will not radically change. Egoism must be expected to continue and to work its havoc; the masses must still sacrifice themselves and suffer, and only so can leisure, the opportunity for genius, arise; illusion and disappointment will still largely characterize the human lot; sickness, old age, and death will still await all alike. The men of genius will have their happy moments and produce their immortal works, which all at scanty intervals may enjoy; the self-forgetting, self-denying, loving, and serving saint may know joy; but *im Grossen und Ganzen* humanity will continue much as it is today.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Werke, vol. ii, p. 347. That character may gradually develop and come to full expression only in the course of a life, goes without saying; but development is not change.

<sup>27</sup> Werke, vol. ii, p. 359; cf. vol. ii, p. 320, "Die Tugend wird nicht gelehrt, so wenig wie der Genius," etc.; also p. 434. Cf. Theognis, lines 429-438: "To beget and rear a child is easier than to instil good principles. No one ever devised means for making fools wise, or bad men good; . . . no amount of teaching will make a bad man good." These lines are quoted both by Plato and Aristotle (Symonds, *The Greek Poets*, vol. i, pp. 263-264).

<sup>28</sup> Schopenhauer once ventures on a priori considerations which make the case more hopeless still. Even perfect intelligences, he says, would in time exhaust the world, and then, for lack of novelty, find existence a bore. The world, as simply the manifestation of will, is a closed world. "Weil nämlich das Wesen aller Dinge im Grunde Eines ist, so ist alle Erkenntniss desselben nothwendig tautologisch; ist es nun ein Mal gefasst, wie es von jenen vollkommensten Intelligenzen bald gefasst sein würde; was bliebe ihnen übrig, als blosses Wiederholung und deren Langeweile, eine endlose Zeit hindurch?" This is the blackest thought in Schopenhauer.

All this of the human world, and perhaps the reader will say it is enough. But the outlook on nature is, to Schopenhauer, no more comforting. It is one thing to observe nature, to see the ideas of things, to feel the beauty of all that appears—but what it would be to *be* those things is another question.<sup>29</sup> What would it be to be a stone forever falling or trying to fall, with its one single meaningless tendency? Happy, we may say, is it that it is unconscious! What would it be to be those restless chemical elements, flying, avoiding, uniting, separating, those electric sparks, darting and hissing, those vital forces, incessantly toiling and ever defeated, shaping nothing that lasts, producing new individuals to take the place of old ones only to see them go too, never reaching a goal, condemned to see species vanish as well as individuals, and to face the time when the last lingering products of their hands will be no more? Happy, perhaps, are they that they do not know the end from the beginning,—do not, save as they come to partial consciousness in man, know at all! And this is saying nothing of the apparently inevitable conflict between these lower forms of life and existence. Schopenhauer knew the facts which Darwin has brought home to us before Darwin, and a world in which beings maintain themselves by consuming one another and every devouring animal is the living grave of others and owes its life to a whole series of martyr-deaths, excited a kind of horror in his mind. A ravenous animal, even an animal clutching its prey, has a kind of terrible beauty about it—art often makes it a subject; but what would it be to *be* that animal—not to say, to be its prey? The thought almost sickens us, and when men say that a world in which such things happen and come near being the rule is the best possible world, Schopenhauer answers, Absurd, a crying absurdity.<sup>30</sup> For it appears to be

<sup>29</sup> “Inzwischen heisst ein Optimist mich die Augen öffnen und hineinsehen in die Welt, wie sie so schön sei, im Sonnenschein, mit ihren Bergen, Thälern, Strömen, Pflanzen, Thieren, u. s. f.—Aber ist denn die Welt ein Guckkasten? *Zu sehen* sind diese Dinge freilich schön; aber sie *zu sein* ist ganz etwas Anderes” (Werke, vol. iii, p. 667). Again, “Jeder Zustand, jeder Mensch, jede Scene des Lebens, braucht nur rein objektiv aufgefasst und zum Gegenstand einer Schilderung, sei es mit dem Pinsel oder mit Worten, gemacht zu werden, um interessant, allerliebste, beneidenswerth zu erscheinen:—aber steckt man darin, ist man es selbst,—da (heisst es oft) mag es der Teufel aushalten” (vol. iii, p. 425).

<sup>30</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 667.

so all up and down the line: animals live in part on one another; men in part on animals; the animals or men that do not live on one another live on plants that are only their kindred lower down; the plants themselves are ravenous, they steal of the water and the earth. The unbrotherly strife that so largely exists in human society exists throughout the world—a hungry will is everywhere; and since it is all of one kind, Schopenhauer compares it to Thyestes of Greek legend, who ate his children, that is, consumed his own flesh. And there is no change, no progress, in the lower world any more than in the human: the lion remains a lion, the tiger a tiger, the snake a snake for ever and ever, just as a bird does, or a fish, or a tree.

Such are the broad lines of the world as Schopenhauer sees it—the world, that is, not now as observed, contemplated, by a will-less intelligence, but as experienced, felt,—as known to one who is a part of it. Behind all its seemings, the world is will, and this is, broadly speaking, the nature and lot of the will.

Browning exclaims,

“All’s right with the world”;

Schopenhauer says, “Something is wrong with the world”; and perhaps Schopenhauer comes nearer to the profoundest consciousness of man. One need not deny his exaggerations of the unhappy or evil side of life: when he says, for instance, pleasure is negative, the distinction seems more academic than real; when he says the will is never satisfied, this may suggest its infinity rather than any reflection upon it; when he says the millions suffer, we may ask, do they need to suffer; when he says there is no progress, we may ask whether there cannot be progress; when he says there is egoism and strife, we may ask whether there may not be love and joyful co-operation. But that the world as it exists is wrong, whatever it may be or might be or will be, wrong too in a deep way, radically wrong, is a different matter, and it is a view that makes the nerve of some of the great religions of the world,—for instance not only of Buddhism, but of historic Christianity. There are things that ought not to be, and yet they are. It is a repellent antinomy; and yet in it, or rather in the first of the two propositions, it may be that what is highest in

man comes to expression. Had not Schopenhauer had some dim sense of a perfect world, he could never have condemned the world as it is—and if we on the other hand find the world satisfactory, it may only be because our idealism is low or is gone. It has always been so. It was Jesus' thought of the kingdom of heaven that made the existing kingdoms of the world appear to him like a vale of darkness and Satan. It was Sakyamouni's vision of a possible state in which should be neither sickness nor age nor pain nor death that made the present life of man seem so pitiful and sad. Moreover, the ideal in the light of which man views the real may make the inspiration by which he transforms it. It is the idealist, not the optimist, who becomes hero, reformer, saviour. It is those who feel the world evil who help to make it good. This is the secret of the great redemptive religions, Buddhism and Christianity. Into religions of this kind, as contrasted with mere nature and natural religions, not only idealism, but the profoundest searchings of the mind to find a way of redemption, and the most ardent energies of the will, may go—into these religions they have gone.

The world is radically wrong. This, then, is what Schopenhauer says. He does not say it like one bringing an indictment against the world, he has no personal grievance, he has no more respect for fretfulness, for misanthropy and hypochondria than any one else;<sup>31</sup> he rarely used the term Pessimism by which his views are commonly dubbed,<sup>32</sup> and when he does, it is principally by way of opposition to Optimism, which seemed to him a wicked way of thinking, a mockery on the nameless sufferings of men; he simply finds the world taken from the inside as experience—and apart from the rare moments of philosophic and artistic contemplation in which we simply look at it, and from the transcendency of ourselves altogether which is the essential meaning of morality—the opposite of what we conceive a perfect world would be; it is a world of egoistic striving in which there is never rest, a world in which things cross one another and prey on one another,

<sup>31</sup> Compare, for example, *Werke*, vol. ii, p. 468; vol. iv ("Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik"), p. 199.

<sup>32</sup> T. Bailey Saunders justly comments on this, in his *Schopenhauer* (London, 1905), p. 84.



a world of pain and age and death. Once he calls it the worst possible of worlds, but by this he says distinctly he does not mean the worst conceivable. I might illustrate his meaning by comparing it to the troubled business of some merchant that goes, but barely goes, and, if it got worse, would go under; so the world is just barely so ordered that it can exist. A worse would involve non-existence.<sup>33</sup> Elsewhere he mentions specific ways in which it might be worse;<sup>34</sup> and still again he says that a more violent will to live, with its extremer sufferings, would make a hell<sup>35</sup>—for, notwithstanding the strong comparison which I quoted earlier, our actual world stops, in Schopenhauer's estimation, short of that extreme. The case is the same with nature at large, nature and man are essentially alike:—to use the wonderful language of the New Testament, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together."<sup>36</sup>

How does such a world—with man as its crown and revealing its inmost essence—come to be? There is the dark and inscrutable problem. Schopenhauer strives to keep close to facts, and to venture on no wild speculations. And yet, as if against himself, or at least his professions,<sup>37</sup> he has his dim gropings, his conjectures and vague views. The wonderful thing is the way in which his latent idealism and implicit and absolute ethical sense come out in them. We in these days are apt to take the world as we find it for granted: not so Schopenhauer—according to the implicit logic of his mind, only the good, the perfect, can be taken for granted; the original of things, the primitive datum,

<sup>33</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 669. So Leibnitz's optimism did not maintain that this was the most abstractly desirable world, but the best of all worlds that could exist, or were possible.

<sup>34</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 670; an alteration in the chemical constitution of the atmosphere, and an elevation of the temperature of the globe, are examples.

<sup>35</sup> Werke, vol. ii, p. 468.

<sup>36</sup> Schopenhauer quotes Aristotle approvingly, *ἡ φύσις δαίμονία ἀλλ' οὐ θεὰ ἐστὶ* (De divin., c. 2, p. 463), and opposes pantheism, saying that a God who could have allowed himself to be turned into a world like ours, must have been plagued by the devil, Werke, vol. iii, p. 398; he believes in the *ἐν καὶ πᾶν* of the pantheists, but not in the *πᾶν θεός*, vol. iii, p. 739. The "unendlicher Naturgeist" is simply the "beharrlicher Wille zum Leben"; on the moral, or inner, side the world is anything but a theophany, vol. iii, p. 678; cf. Volkelt, p. 189.

<sup>37</sup> Werke, vol. iii, pp. 679, 736–737; cf. Frauenstädt's Einleitung, Werke, vol. i, pp. 38–39.

that which is beyond all explanation, because it needs none, cannot be like this faulty world we see.<sup>38</sup> We regard pain and sickness, old age and death, as a part of the natural order of things; but no, says Schopenhauer, they are not natural; they could not be, but for some violation of the final law of things, they are results, penalties of wrong-doing somewhere.<sup>39</sup> Let us for the moment transplant ourselves into a very different atmosphere from the modern one and conceive of ourselves as tarrying for a while in purgatory, as Dante conceived it,—how far should we be from right if we imagined that what we saw about us was the natural, normal order of things, if we did not recognize that it had its cause and its reason for being outside itself, that it was but a passing state for souls who had done wrong and were now learning to do better, that it was a provisional world entirely? By some such comparison we may perhaps make real to ourselves the kind of speculation Schopenhauer was led into in regard to this strange and unsatisfactory world in which we live. It is not a world that has its own justification, he repeatedly declares; it cannot be explained by itself—there is no proof that it exists for its own sake, its own advantage. And the explanation Schopenhauer gives, or rather ventures on, is moral. As implicitly as the Greeks of Homer's world felt, when some calamity or ill overtook them, that there must have been wrong-doing somewhere which now the gods were punishing,<sup>40</sup> so Schopen-

<sup>38</sup> I am giving here the implications of Schopenhauer's thought, not quoting him; but (*Werke*, vol. iii, p. 194) he speaks of the order of nature as not the only and absolute order of things, and says that ethics is inseparable from this conviction; cf. vol. iii, p. 740, where it is reckoned among the distinctive marks of his philosophy, as contrasted with pantheism, "dass bei mir die Welt nicht die ganze Möglichkeit alles Seins ausfüllt." He repeatedly speaks of "ein ganz anderartiges Dasein, eine andere Welt," for instance in vol. iii, pp. 495, 497.

<sup>39</sup> Schopenhauer speaks sympathetically of the religions that recognize "dass Schmerz und Tod nicht liegen können in der ewigen ursprünglichen und unabänderlichen Ordnung der Dinge, in Dem, was in jedem Betracht sein sollte," *Werke*, vol. iii, p. 188. Frauenstädt recognizes the distinction: "Denn die Verneinung des Willens zum Leben ist nicht Verneinung des Urseienden, der absoluten Substanz, sondern nur Verneinung jenes intelligibelen Willenacts, dessen Erscheinung diese unsere räumlich-zeitliche Welt ist," *Werke*, vol. i, *Einleitung*, p. 87.

<sup>40</sup> So also to Aeschylus, when a man suffers, it is a divine Nemesis upon sin (Jebb, *Classical Greek Poetry*, p. 181).

hauer says, "Every great suffering, whether it be physical or spiritual, tells us what we deserve, for it could not come to us, had we not deserved it."<sup>41</sup> I remember, when first coming on passages of this sort, saying to myself that Schopenhauer was far more under the influence of the older theological ideas of mankind than he was aware of—and it would perhaps not be exaggerating to speak of him not only as the metaphysician *par excellence* of our modern world, but as the moralist-metaphysician, the theologian, *par excellence*.<sup>42</sup> It is only that he was a "theologian" after his own kind, and not perhaps quite after the manner of the divinity schools. He is not theist, though he has a friendlier feeling for theism than for Spinozism or pantheism, since it contemplates a time when this world was not.<sup>43</sup> But he is also removed from the smooth and easy ways of modern rationalism,<sup>44</sup> which traces the evil in life and in man to circumstances and conditions, and ignores the headlong, egoistic will,—which thinks man is what he is by his habits and his actions and not by his nature. Schopenhauer is so far with Luther and with Augustine against Pelagius.<sup>45</sup> He thinks that not only does man act as he ought not to act, but *is* what he ought not to *be*; yes, that his actions come from his nature, being simply called forth

<sup>41</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 666. Volkelt, p. 281, says, "In der That, es tritt uns bei Schopenhauer in seiner Lehre von der Weltschuld eine altehrwürdige Weisheit, ein uraltes düsteres Ahnen der Menschheit entgegen."

<sup>42</sup> Volkelt, p. 279, says, "Schon in seiner Jugend bemerkte Schopenhauer gegen Schelling, dass das Moralische das Allerrealste sei, dem gegenüber alles, was sonst als real erscheint, in Nichtigkeit versinke"; cf. Schopenhauer's express words (Werke, vol. iii, p. 506), "Das Moralische ist es, worauf nach dem Zeugniß unseres innersten Bewusstseins alles ankommt." Still further, Schopenhauer, while emphatically dissenting from the view that theism is inseparable from morality, will not admit that the same may be said of metaphysics in general, meaning by this the view that the order of nature is not the only and absolute order of things: therefore, he adds, one might propose it as the necessary credo of all just and good men; "I believe in a metaphysic," Werke, vol. iii, p. 194, cf. vol. iv ("Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik"), p. 109.

<sup>43</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 189; he also has severe words of reprobation for naturalism, saying that it is a "fundamentaler" and "verderblichster Irrthum," yes, really an "eigentliche Perversität der Gesinnung," to give the world "bloss eine physische, keine moralische Bedeutung." As to Schopenhauer's attitude to pantheism, cf. Volkelt, p. 189.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Werke, vol. i, "Ueber die vierfachen Würlzel," p. 122; vol. iii, p. 718.

<sup>45</sup> Werke, vol. iii, pp. 693, 694, 718.

by external occasions, as the action of the forces of nature in general is called forth by the occasions, not produced by them—out of the good treasure of his heart a good man brings forth good things, and out of the evil treasure an evil man evil things (this saying of Jesus Schopenhauer quotes with absolute approval).<sup>46</sup> Hence it is not so much a change in conduct as a change in nature that man needs.<sup>47</sup> Down deep is the need, and the sin, of man—and down deep, beyond anything we have experimental knowledge of, is the guilt. Man comes into the world with this headlong, unscrupulous, sometimes ferocious will to live—circumstances have not made him so, he has not made himself so by any temporal act, any more than the animal has made his will to devour, or the plant its will to seize on nourishment wherever it can get it. How can we account for such a fact, how can we keep morality (right) at the bottom of things, how avoid the conclusion that it is an insane, immoral world in which we live?

Schopenhauer answers: by supposing that the will, which, in its varying forms, is the driving force and essence of this world, somewhere in the wide reach and infinite space of things fell, wandered from the right course, became estranged from the bliss at the heart of things; and that here in this world, which it fashions—for something of subtle, creative, divine power still attaches to it and it trails clouds of glory as well as of shame—here in this world it is undergoing expiation,<sup>48</sup> is coming to a knowledge of itself; and that thus it is led by its very suffering and finiteness, by sickness, by old age, by death, to renounce itself, to transcend itself, to wish to cease to be any longer as this striving individ-

<sup>46</sup> Werke, vol. iv, "Die beiden Grundprobleme," p. 251, quoting Luke 6, 45.

<sup>47</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 693. Schopenhauer is stating here the Pauline position, but at bottom he is at one with it: "Wenn auch die Schuld im Handeln, im *operari*, liegt; so liegt doch die Wurzel der Schuld in unserer *essentia et existentia*, da aus dieser das *operari* nothwendig hervorgeht, wie ich in der Preisschrift über die Freiheit des Willens dargethan habe." Volkelt says, p. 285, "Kant's Lehre vom radikalen Bösen ist der Schopenhauerischen vom Leben als einer Schuld nächstverwandt."

<sup>48</sup> "Das Leiden ist in der That der Läuterungsprocess, durch welchen allein, in den meisten Fällen, der Mensch geheiligt, d. h. von dem Irrweg des Willens zum Leben zurückgeführt wird" (Werke, vol. iii, p. 731). Cf. Volkelt, p. 357. Perhaps I should say that instead of "this world, which it fashions" in the text, a more correct expression would be "this world, in which it manifests itself."

ual, cut off from other individuals and warring with them, to cease to be altogether, if living and striving alone are life, but really rather to re-enter that bliss, that rest, from which it came, and which cannot be named or conceived, save as the contrary of all we know as fitful, uncertain, struggling life. At bottom it is the same profound ethico-philosophical process of thought that led to the doctrine of the Fall of Man,—a doctrine which the present day finds so absurd, and yet which Schopenhauer declared the one doctrine which reconciled him to the Old Testament, pervaded in general as he found it to be with shallow optimistic hopes.<sup>49</sup> We in these days more easily dispense with the idea of a fall, because, if we conceive of perfection at all (as we ordinarily do not), we put it at the end or the summit of things; but if we put perfection at the beginning or at the basis of things, as Christianity does in its idea of God,<sup>50</sup> and as Schopenhauer essentially did, then there must have been a fall—otherwise we cannot account for the imperfect world we find.<sup>51</sup> Why the will erred, how it erred, how it could have erred, Schopenhauer does not say, and knows he cannot say—they are questions beyond all power of answer. But the idea of a fall (*Abfall*, *Abirrung*, *Verirrung*, *Wahn*—such are his phrases) seemed to him a metaphysical and a moral necessity.

<sup>49</sup> Werke, vol. iii, pp. 666, 713.

<sup>50</sup> Mr. Bernard Shaw's "God" is one who can make something more perfect than himself; not so the Christian idea.

<sup>51</sup> When preparing at Weimar for the University and reading the tragedies of Sophocles, the conviction came to him, "dass alle zeitlichen Uebel gegründet seien in einem unbedingten ewigen Urübel" (so Volkelt, p. 11, citing W. Gwinner, Schopenhauer's Leben, 2d ed., pp. 746-747). To save the essential rightness of things Schopenhauer even goes further than Christian theology, for it conceives of man as put here in this world without his will, which Schopenhauer calls a "schreiende Ungerechtigkeit" (Werke, vol. iii, p. 692); according to Schopenhauer, man is here because of his will,—it is his will that makes the world and all things in it, so that in his suffering and disappointment he but experiences what he has made and finds out its sorry character. In complete intelligence, indeed, he would not have made it. But if man as he exists here is the work of a different being from himself, then the responsibility for what he does (seine Schuld) falls back on his author (Werke, vol. iii, p. 676). "Daher ist er nur in dem Fall, dass er selbst sein eigenes Werk sei, d. h. Aseität habe, für sein Thun verantwortlich" (Werke, vol. iv, "Die beiden Grundprobleme," p. 73). Consolation is accordingly to be found not in the physical, but in the moral, view of things (Werke, vol. iii, p. 676), and his philosophy, he holds, is the only one that does full justice to morality (ibid.; cf. Volkelt, p. 331).

There is, then, no arbitrariness in the world; there is rather eternal righteousness (over and over Schopenhauer uses this phrase); we ought to be unhappy, therefore we are so. We blindly choose individual life and now in living we see what we choose. Guilt and misery are equal; and if in a special case one man sins and another suffers, yet, more deeply seen, the one who sins and the one who suffers are the same—the same in kind, the same in essence. He who injures another really, like Thyestes, bites into his own flesh. The eternal order does no wrong. We, will—in men, animals, plants, and insensate things,—we, the world, are responsible for what we suffer in the world.<sup>52</sup> Such, if I may say so, is Schopenhauer's theodicy.

## II. THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION

To the early Christian view the world as it then was, full of sin and suffering and death, did not deserve to stand, awaited its end, and would soon have it. A new world would arise in which right would dwell, in which sorrow and crying and pain would be no more, in which death itself would cease—a world in which the face of nature would be made over, in which not only men should no longer war, but the lion should lie down with the lamb and the leopard with the kid, in which a great love and a great peace should enwrap all things. It was a dream into which all the idealism of a people's mind and heart was concentrated.

The world has grown sadly wiser since the days of Jesus and Paul and the writer of the Apocalypse; and to our steady science, and unwinged philosophy, and limited moral demands, the idea seems fantastic. And yet occasionally those who live in their minds and moral imaginations more than in their senses have

<sup>52</sup> Werke, vol. ii, p. 415: "Will man wissen, was die Menschen, moralisch betrachtet, im Ganzen und Allgemeinen werth sind; so betrachte man ihr Schicksal, im Ganzen und Allgemeinen. Dieses ist Mangel, Elend, Jammer, Qual und Tod. Die ewige Gerechtigkeit waltet: wären sie nicht, im Ganzen genommen, nichtswürdig; so würde ihr Schicksal, im Ganzen genommen, nicht so traurig sein. In diesem Sinne können wir sagen: die Welt selbst ist das Weltgericht. Könnte man allen Jammer der Welt in *eine* Waagschale legen, und alle Schuld der Welt in die andere; so würde gewiss die Zunge eintreten."

kindred thoughts, and, allowing for changed intellectual conditions, a similar idea confronts us in Schopenhauer. If, indeed, death is natural, a part of the normal order of things, if pain and suffering are only what we must expect, if sin and wrong are to be taken for granted, in other words, if there is nothing strange, repellent, and unnatural about the world as we find it, then is Schopenhauer's idea nonsensical and the speculation by which he reaches it a trouble over nothing; but if so, equally nonsensical is the historic Christian idea that has come down to us today, not altogether changed, in the common conception of heaven. The nerve of Schopenhauer's, as of the Christian, view is that wrong and suffering and death are somehow contrary to us, contrary to the mind as well as the heart, something abnormal or irrational, something requiring explanation, something that cannot possibly be conceived as ultimate, unless irrationality and devilry are put at the heart of things; for it is because what we see and experience, the whole melancholy spectacle of the world, is not natural, that Schopenhauer and the original Christian tradition were led to conceive a second nature, a super-nature, another order and scheme of things, in which all that perplexes and affronts and confounds us has disappeared. Professor Deussen of Kiel speaks of Schopenhauer as a philosopher *christianissimus*<sup>53</sup>—and in some of Schopenhauer's meta-

<sup>53</sup> *Erinnerungen an F. Nietzsche* (1901), p. 104. Compare Professor Hans Vaihinger of Halle: "Man kann im Gegentheil sagen, dass keiner der neueren Philosophen so tief in des Wesen des Christenthums eingedrungen ist, und den Kern desselben so warm vertheidigt hat, als Schopenhauer. Man vergleiche nur, was Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Herbart und selbst Schleiermacher über das Christenthum gesagt haben, mit dem, was sich bei Schopenhauer findet. Insbesondere sind es drei Grundbegriffe des Christenthums, welche bei Schopenhauer tiefste Würdigung finden: das Böse, die Liebe, die Weltverachtung" (*Nietzsche als Philosoph*, 3d ed., pp. 66-67). Schopenhauer speaks of Christianity as "jene vortreffliche und heilbringende Religion" (*Werke*, vol. ii, p. 458). He distinguishes its kernel from its husk, explaining, "Bei keiner Sache hat man so sehr den Kern von der Schaale zu unterscheiden, wie beim Christenthum. Eben weil ich diesen Kern hochschätze, mache ich mit der Schaale bisweilen wenig Umstände: sie ist jedoch dicker, als man meistens denkt" (*Werke*, vol. iii, p. 718). The ethics of Christianity he declares indestructible (*Werke*, vol. ii, p. 458, cf. p. 483), but it is its sense of man's need of redemption (of a change of nature, not merely in conduct) that makes his real point of contact with it; see vol. iii, p. 693, also pp. 718-719. Protestantism, despite Luther's serious views, is on the whole, to his

physical presuppositions, as well as in certain aspects of his ethics, this is true.

We have seen that Schopenhauer accounted for the world and its evil by an original aberration of the will, and that he cleared the essential nature of things of taint by saying that as the suffering is the will's, so is the guilt. In this is implied the essential freedom of the will, to which Schopenhauer held along with Kant, and, if space allowed, I should be glad to give some account of the wonderful little treatise in which his view is expounded.<sup>54</sup> As man is, Schopenhauer holds that his actions are all determined: with a certain character (and every man has an inborn character) a given stimulus or situation inevitably calls forth a certain act—there is as much, and, at bottom, the same, necessity in human conduct as in natural events. And yet man feels responsible for his acts, he knows they are his acts and not another's—we are the doers of our deeds: and if there is any sense in this deep consciousness and feeling, then when we have done wrong it must be that it was possible for us to do otherwise; and if our act springs inevitably from our character, it must have been possible for that character to be different; and if we have not mind, an "Abfall" from Christianity (vol. iii, p. 718): it is an "ausgeartetes Christenthum" (vol. iii, p. 719).

Schopenhauer honors especially the older, severer, ascetic type of Christianity. The whole passage deserves to be quoted: "Der Protestantismus hat, indem er die Askese und deren Centralpunkt, die Verdienstlichkeit des Cölibats, eliminierte, eigentlich schon den innersten Kern des Christenthums aufgegeben und ist insofern als ein Abfall von demselben anzusehen. Dies hat sich in unsern Tagen herausgestellt in dem allmäligen Uebergang desselben in den platten Rationalismus, diesen modernen Pelagianismus, der am Ende hinausläuft auf eine Lehre von einem liebenden Vater, der die Welt gemacht hat, damit es hübsch vergnügt darauf zugehe (was ihm dann freilich missrathen sein müsste), und der, wenn man nur in gewissen Stücken sich seinem Willen anbequemt, auch nachher für eine noch viel hübschere Welt sorgen wird (bei der nur zu beklagen ist, dass sie eine so fatale Entree hat). Das mag eine gute Religion für komfortable, verheirathete und aufgeklärte Pastoren sein [cf. John Henry Newman, Discussions and Arguments, p. 42]; aber das ist kein Christenthum. Das Christenthum ist die Lehre von der tiefen Verschuldung des Menschengeschlechts durch sein Dasein selbst und dem Drange des Herzens nach Erlösung daraus, welche jedoch nur durch die schwersten Opfer und durch die Verleugnung des eigenen Selbst, also durch eine gänzliche Umkehrung der menschlichen Natur erlangt werden kann" (vol. iii, pp. 718-719).

<sup>54</sup> "Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik, I. Ueber die Freiheit des Willens," Werke, vol. iv, pp. 3-102.



determined the character here in this earthly life, we must have done so elsewhere. Without responsibility, no ethics—neither morality nor immorality in any genuine sense of the word; and without ultimate freedom, the possibility of alternative choice, no responsibility; if we, in our very selves, are not the doers of our deeds, we are not accountable for them. This is the argumentation; and according to Schopenhauer we are responsible. It is our inmost will that makes us what we are—that will which is simply revealed to us by the successive circumstances of life, not shaped or created by them. We cannot understand this freedom: understanding is limited to single acts which may be traced back to this as their ultimate ground; but freedom itself is un-understandable, we can see its place and necessity, but we cannot comprehend it, or even clearly, objectively conceive it—it is, Schopenhauer confesses, a mystery, and, in his eyes, a holy one, since all the sanctities of life hang on it. The will has gone wrong—and in this way, to this extent, the world is wrong: such is Schopenhauer's logic.

But if such is the evil of the world, and such its origin, how shall we escape from it—how pass from the purgatory which this world essentially is? Many, disappointed, beaten, or baffled in life, have recourse to suicide. Nothing serves to bring out the peculiar and distinguishing character of Schopenhauer's philosophy better than his treatment of suicide. He does not call it a crime, but it is to his mind a vain and foolish act—it does not end the trouble; for the trouble is that one wants happiness and cannot get it—and one dies wanting happiness and because he cannot get it; that is, he dies willing life and happiness—his will is alive in death as truly as in life, it is the cause of his death; yet in this will which seeks life and the happiness of life is the root of all the trouble, for instead of allowing suffering and disappointment to quiet and allay this will, one goes on craving as strongly and lustily as ever, and is like a sick man who, rather than suffer a painful operation—which would cure him—to be completed, prefers to remain sick. For the will is not, according to Schopenhauer, the result of life and the bodily organization, it is the cause of them or rather the reality of them; and the uncured will, the will untaught by the real lessons of life, gains nothing

by suicide—being only deepened and confirmed in its illusions by this desperate act. In other words, the suicide has lost his chance of finding the meaning of life—he goes from it after all his years no wiser than when, full of headlong will, he came to it. Will unredeemed, will vain and empty, not going to happiness or knowing what happiness is,—such is the spectacle which the suicide presents to Schopenhauer's mind. We escape from suffering, not by quitting the world, but only by stilling the will to live, which makes the world. Wherever there is will to assert a separate, individual existence, craving its own separate, individual welfare and happiness, there is bound to be suffering, according to his reading of existence. The world—this world as we know it—is the result of the action and clashing of innumerable wills of this description; hence the suffering, which we all sooner or later taste. Not escaping from suffering, but fathoming its meaning, is the true human task.

Did Schopenhauer, then, we may ask, believe in immortality? In a sense—a deep sense—I would answer, yes. Our consciousness may go, our intellect, but the will and the peculiar type it assumes, the character—in other words, our profoundest being, often unknown to us in our own life—this does not go; it belongs to a realm of the indestructible—it is this and what is like it that has made the world, and it belongs to the inner essence of the world. Schopenhauer's phrase is "indestructibility," a more absolute term than immortality. In nature, that is, among plants and animals, there is no essential difference between the individuals of a species, they are all one idea and there is no occasion for the perpetuation of the individuals,—there is only the indestructibility of the type, that is, of the will incorporated or objectified in it. But there are radical differences between human individuals; as Schopenhauer puts it, "each man is a particular idea," "an entirely peculiar idea"; hence in the case of men the indestructibility of the idea carries the essential indestructibility of the individual with it. Intellect, consciousness, are more or less passing things, but the will cannot be destroyed—and if it wills to live, it will live; if it wills to seek after happiness, it will seek after happiness; and if it dies, as the suicide ordinarily dies, because of an inextinguishable thirst for

happiness and life, then in some other manner of existence it is bound to pursue the same illusory search and striving as here.<sup>55</sup> The difference of Schopenhauer's from our ordinary view—or at least a difference—is that to him immortality is a fate rather than anything else, that separate, striving life elsewhere is no better than separate, striving life here; and that the supreme task is to transcend this egoistic will, lustful of life and pleasure, once and forever.

Suicide, then, is no way out. The real way must be of a different character—it must take account of the seat of the trouble. In fact, Schopenhauer points out two ways—one partial, the other complete. The trouble, I need not repeat, is in our interested, craving will. Well, one way is to leave the standpoint of the will altogether, as we do in philosophy and art—to become pure, observing, contemplating intelligence and appreciation. When we can lose ourselves in philosophic study, when we can contemplate the beautiful, the sublime, or the terrible in nature, putting our personalities and our personal fortunes out of view, a singular elevation and rest come over us—for the moment anxieties, cares, hopes and fears, fortune and misfortune, merit and demerit, are gone, "*und uns ist völlig wohl.*" It is that painless condition, Schopenhauer says, which Epicurus praised as the highest good and the state of the gods—for we are for that moment freed from the miserable driving of the will, we celebrate the Sabbath from the labors to which we are condemned, the wheel of Ixion stands still. Philosophy and, above all, art are, to Schopenhauer, the flowering of life, and extraordinary and almost rapturous are the expressions he sometimes uses—it is a veritable redemption from our individuality, its finiteness and its woes, which they bring. He quotes Goethe's lines,

*"Was im Leben uns verdriesst,  
Man im Bilde gern genießt"*

("What in life vexes us, we yet enjoy in a picture"), and recalls

<sup>55</sup> "So lange keine Verneinung jenes Willens eingetreten, ist was der Tod von uns übrig lässt der Keim und Kern eines ganz andern Daseins, in welchem ein neues Individuum sich wiederfindet, so frisch und ursprünglich, dass es über sich selbst verwundert brütet" (Werke, vol. iii, p. 574). Compare: "Was jeder im Innersten will, dass muss er sein" (Werke, vol. ii, p. 433).

a period in his youth when he was constantly trying to see himself and his doings from outside and to picture them—probably, as he adds, to make them more enjoyable. If only the moments of philosophic and artistic joy could last!—they are like the ray of sunlight that sometimes cuts through a storm and, though in the midst of it, is unaffected by it. For a few indeed they may last, those so gifted and so fortunately circumstanced that their lives can practically be given up to philosophical activity or to artistic creation. They are among the perfect specimens of our human type, they are the favored ones of earth—those for whom, as Nietzsche asserted in essential sympathy with Schopenhauer, the world and all the rest of mankind exist; they make a kind of justification of the world. But these perfect ones are rare, and the times when most of us can enjoy their works are rare. For the great majority, life is in the main not philosophic and aesthetic contemplation or creation, but struggle, struggle to live, suffering, disappointment, sickness, old age, death—yes, even genius does not escape the last-named fates; and sometimes genius is a tragedy, for there are those who have the power to see and create, and circumstances do not allow them to do so.

Hence another way of redemption is needed for man—even for the genius. The fact is, we live, and cannot merely look on life; we live, and philosophy and art do not change life; we live, and have the lot of living things, birth and change and death; we live, and cannot rid ourselves of the demands of life—sometimes using ourselves up in the struggle to live at all; we have put ourselves into being and now we feel the yoke-straps of the necessity we have created. Even to elevate a few above care the rest of us must work with more care—the men of genius stand on the backs of the laboring multitudes.<sup>56</sup> And so, confronted with these imperious realities, philosophy and art may seem not only a partial, but an illusory, redemption. They take man away from life, and how does that help those who have still to live? Thus Schopenhauer is led on to a deeper doctrine.

The doctrine, it must be admitted at the outset, is of an unheard-of hardness and extremity—that is, is so to us of the Western world, full of the pulse of life and with all our naïve confidence

<sup>56</sup> Here is another starting-point of Nietzsche's.

in it unbroken. The blood of the Vikings and of primal man is still in us—we come into the world lustful and willing, and we continue to crave and to will without end. Very well, says Schopenhauer (in principle), so far as this is the case I have no medicine for you—I have medicine only for such as are sick; the will is almighty and I lay down no rules for it. But if perchance the world is not to your mind, if your lot, the common human lot, is not to your mind, if you yourself are not to your mind, if you would rather be something different from this hungry, craving, restless, ever dissatisfied, beaten, and baffled being that you are, I can perhaps show you a way out—and this is, to be abrupt and bald, to cease to wish to live a separate, individual existence. For, he argues (and it is the gist of his general philosophy), the world and life are the manifestation, or objectivation, of will, of my will and your will and the wills in animal, plant, and stone; the contradictions and confusion of the world and life are the manifestation of the inner contradictions and confusion of will itself, each individualization of it wanting its own way, I wanting mine, you yours, others theirs, each asserting itself, subjecting others or subjected to them, each implicitly saying, “I,” “I,” and tolerating others only as they serve it (make the I more I), the world having only so much order as is necessary to keep these contradictions going. Hence, since the craving for individual life is the seat of all the trouble, there is no way out but to still the craving, to let it die and cease to be.

I have said Schopenhauer “argues,” I have even spoken of his “prescribing” to those who are sick. But in reality arguing and prescribing amount to little in his estimation. It is a matter at last of each man’s experience, of each man’s intuition, and of each man’s will. If, notwithstanding all that has been said respecting the unsatisfactoriness and even bitterness of life taken as experience, one still has courage and the will to live, he can go on living and death need have no terrors for him—for death has no power over the essential will, and while one wills to live, one will live in some form or other; will is the essence of the world, and birth and death only affect its manifestation, not its content. In the Bhagavad-Gita Krishna raises by thoughts like these the

mind of his young pupil Arjuna, when, seized with compunction at the sight of the arrayed hosts (somewhat as Xerxes was), he loses heart and desires to give up the battle in order to avert the death of so many thousands. Krishna leads him to this point of view, and then the death of thousands no longer restrains him; he gives the sign for battle. It is the point of view of Goethe's Prometheus, who says,

"Here sit I, form men  
After my image,  
A race, like myself,  
To suffer, to weep,  
To enjoy and to rejoice,  
And thee not to heed  
As I."

It is only as by experience or reflection one is led to a different view, as one becomes weary of birth and death, weary of striving to maintain a separate, individual existence, weary of the contradictions, the clashings, and the miseries of a world in which this individualistic striving comes to outward and visible expression, as one pines and longs for another type of existence, for a different kind of world from that we know—it is only so that Schopenhauer's other alternative has any practical meaning or application to him.<sup>57</sup> The will is sovereign and it can choose.

But if one chooses to be a different being and have a different world, one can be it and have it. The non-existence of this world is just as possible as the existence of it.<sup>58</sup> The will has fallen from the normal and eternal order of things (dimly conceived, but absolutely held to, by Schopenhauer) and can rise to it. We must radically distinguish Schopenhauer's thought from what is often called the pessimistic view of man as a being of no account—of no significance and no power; Schopenhauer's pessimism is as different from that of the *blasé* man of the world or of a contemner of human beings and trifler with them like Napoleon

<sup>57</sup> The alternatives are powerfully and movingly stated in *Werke*, vol. ii, pp. 334–336.

<sup>58</sup> "In der That ist die Unruhe, welche die nie ablaufende Uhr der Metaphysik in Bewegung erhielt, das Bewusstsein, dass das Nichtsein dieser Welt ebenso möglich sei, wie ihr Dasein" (*Werke*, vol. iii, p. 189).

and all the other conquerors, military and commercial, who ride over men's prostrate forms to glory, as light from darkness. Man's life on the earth is vain, but not man—and Schopenhauer's essential thought is that man might be at better business, yes, be a better thing than he is.

The difficulty is in conceiving how man can transcend the will to live—for the wish to be, to assert ourselves, to prolong our days and even to live forever as this particular individuality, seems to belong to our very nature. And yet, Schopenhauer says, he who goes to meet death bravely and unconcernedly (he has in mind the soldier or hero of any type) triumphs over the will to live; to such a man there is something more than life, and he had rather die than not heed the call—and it is a total perversion of his consciousness, a psychological untruth, to say he does so only as he expects to live again. Schopenhauer quotes Schiller with approval: "*Das Leben ist der Güter höchstes nicht.*"<sup>59</sup> To him morality itself, as disinterested love, transcends the individual will to live; it is a striving in quite an opposite direction from that towards happiness, welfare, life;<sup>60</sup> in love, he was aware, one may give up life. But if in these ways man's lust for life may be conquered, so in others it may not be so much conquered as quieted, made dead. Schopenhauer tells of Raymond Lully, a youthful courtier who afterwards became famous in the annals of the church. Enamoured of a beautiful woman, he was at last bidden to her chamber, where he went expecting the consummation of his desire, but instead she opened her bodice and showed the bosom horribly eaten by cancer. He turned, left the court, and went out into the desert to do penance; he became dead to life. So the sight of any irremediable illness, or of slowly creeping old age, or of

<sup>59</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 498, the reference being to the Braut von Messina.

<sup>60</sup> Werke, vol. ii, p. 427; cf. vol. iv, "Die beiden Grundprobleme," p. 113. In vol. iii, p. 240, Schopenhauer even uses language that will seem to many extreme: "Das Unmoralische im Willen als eine Unvollkommenheit desselben anzusehen, wäre ein grundfalscher Gesichtspunkt: vielmehr hat die Moralität eine Quelle, welche eigentlich schon über die Natur hinaus liegt, daher sie mit den Aussagen derselben in Widerspruch steht. Darum eben tritt sie dem natürlichen Willen, als welcher an sich schlechthin egoistisch ist, geradezu entgegen, ja, die Fortsetzung ihres Weges führt zur Aufhebung desselben." Again (vol. iii, p. 564), he says that virtue and egoism are "von Grund aus Entgegengesetzte."

actual death, may turn one from life—so powerfully may its instability and fleetingness be felt. Or the pages of history may sicken one, the triumph of the unprincipled and vile, the indignities heaped on the poor and the weak, the general sordidness—one may not see “the steady gain of man” of which our American poet speaks, and even today, in the midst of all our wealth and “progress,” Matthew Arnold’s line,

“The millions suffer still and grieve,”

may seem true. Yes, a kind of tragedy may seem to lie at the basis of the world, and, as the glories of the Periclean age rested on slavery (the necessary subjection of the many), so, *mutatis mutandis*, now; that there may be leisure for genius, the rest must toil. Hence it may at last come over one that the root of the tragedy, and the presupposition of all disappointment and of all pain, lie in that strong will to live, and to live at any cost, that he is aware of in himself, and he may sicken of it and desire to cast it out.

Thus, either by violent shock and suffering or by a musing contemplation of the world and a train of natural reflection, the eager imperious will so characteristic of most of us may be quieted, stilled, deadened. The ordinary motives that lead to the striving, troubled life of men then act no longer. If they do arise, as from time to time they may, the effort of the will comes now to be to deny them, to mortify them. Schopenhauer goes far in the ascetic practices he countenances; and the higher, severer, extremer forms of mortification he describes almost with awe. It is not the genius he now portrays, but the saint. The saint denies, for example, that most concentrated form of the will to live, the sexual impulse. He chooses poverty and gives away, not merely to help others, but that the satisfaction of wishes, the sweetness of life made possible by earthly possessions, may not lure his will again. He does not strive when others do him wrong—wounded vanity or pride no longer stirs him. He gives to his body sparingly, lest it grow strong and bloom and reawaken the will; he fasts rather and chastises the body, in order to break and kill out that will to live of which it is the expression. And when death comes to him, it is not pain nor dis-



appointment, but release;<sup>61</sup> for Schopenhauer recognizes the difficulty of self-suppression, the ardor of the conflict, and says that victory may never be complete while the body lasts. It may seem a gloomy picture, but in the dim background there is to Schopenhauer's vision a kind of unearthly light—like the light in the gloom of a monastery chapel, or those churches one may find in Italy that have no beauty or grace when seen from without, but are radiant within. For to Schopenhauer, the saint, or he who is on the way to become one and to the extent he has gone, has freedom as no one else in the world has, he has rest such as cannot come after the proudest earthly victory, and joy for which there are no words. The genius, the philosopher or artist—he, too, has for the moments of his contemplation or creation transcended the standpoint of the will, he lives in another atmosphere than the feverish one in which most men pass their days, he has an elevated joy; but it is all for moments only, and when the will reasserts itself, when the needs and cravings of life are felt, he is in purgatory again. The saint's joy is as deep as his renunciation of the will is, and it is as perduring as that. He may even seem to delight in life again, but it is as one detached from life. He may go about doing good, he may smile, he may sing, he may even dance (Schopenhauer cites the Shakers, the Rappists, the Russian Raskolnik, the ancient Essenes), but it is because he is so absolutely at rest from himself, because there is nothing he wants, because he is now in himself, as it were, all things, all joy and peace. If outward suffering comes to him, he is, like Horatio,

“As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,”

—for there is a core of his being beyond the reach of suffering; that is a higher in him than the will to live, and that is untouched.

It is impossible, without verbally transcribing whole passages of Schopenhauer, to give an idea of the emotion he shows in describing the saint. Perhaps because he was not a saint himself and did not pretend to be, he loves the more to dwell on the idea which,

<sup>61</sup> Werke, vol. ii, pp. 449–451: the fasting may go as far as starvation, pp. 474–475.

as it were, haunted his soul and drew him toward it despite himself. The saint is one who, however poor, joyless, and full of privation his outward condition may seem, is filled with inward joy and the true peace of heaven. The man who has his wants gratified is like the beggar who gets an alms and the next day hungers again; the saint like one who comes into an hereditary possession—he is above care and want forever. Nothing troubles him more, nothing can trouble him, for he has cut all the thousand cords of will which hold us bound to the world, and—as desire, fear, envy, anger—drag us hither and thither in constant pain. He now looks back smiling and at rest on the delusions of this world, which once were able to move and agonize his spirit but now stand before him as indifferent as are chessmen to the players when the game is ended, or as, in the morning, the cast-off masquerading-dress, which worried and disquieted us in a night of carnival.<sup>62</sup> Life and its forms pass before him still only as a fleeting phenomenon, as does to one half-awake a light morning-dream through which reality shimmers and which no more deceives; and like this dream they, too, vanish at last, without violent transition. From this, Schopenhauer adds, we can understand in what sense Madame Guyon, toward the end of the story of her life, so often says: “To me everything is indifferent; I can will nothing more; often I do not know whether I exist or not.”<sup>63</sup>

We see from all this how little our ordinary ideas of pessimism agree with the view of Schopenhauer. He belongs rather among the mystics, quietists, illuminists, men like John Tauler and Meister Eckhart.<sup>64</sup> He has essential sympathy with Cath-

<sup>62</sup> Cf. John Henry Newman: “We should consider ourselves to be in this world in no fuller sense than players in any game are in the game; and life to be a sort of dream, as detached and different from our real eternal existence, as a dream differs from waking; a serious dream, indeed, as affording a means of judging us, yet in itself a kind of shadow without substance, a scene set before us in which we seem to be, and in which it is our duty to act just as if all we saw had a truth and reality, because all that meets us influences us and our destiny” (Parochial and Plain Sermons, vol. iv, p. 221).

<sup>63</sup> Werke, vol. iii, pp. 720-721; vol. ii, p. 244; vol. ii, pp. 461-462.

<sup>64</sup> Of Eckhart's book, *Die deutsche Theologie*, he says, “Die darin gegebenen Vorschriften und Leben sind die vollständigste aus tief innerster Ueberzeugung entsprungene Auseinandersetzung Dessen, was ich als die Verneinung des Willens zum Leben dargestellt habe” (Werke, vol. ii, p. 457). Only second stands Tauler's *Nachfolgung des armen Leben Christi* and *Medulla animae*. The New Testament is the first initiation, and the mystics the second, to this higher lore.

olic Christianity and with the spirit of Buddhism. Indeed he reverentially describes a phenomenon that is essentially the same under widely different creeds, a phenomenon that belongs to human nature rather than to any specific intellectual atmosphere—he himself remarks on this.<sup>65</sup>

Still less does Schopenhauer's conception of the ultimate destiny of the self-renouncing will correspond with the ordinary pessimistic spirit. I approach a subject of great difficulty here; but the impressions which many have of Schopenhauer's teaching are most superficial. They fancy that he holds that the world is a huge mistake, and that Nothing is the end of it. They think that ceasing to will to live is ceasing to be and that blank non-existence was what he coveted for himself and all men. Even a scholar like Otto Pfeiderer calls nihilism his eschatology.<sup>66</sup> But many times Schopenhauer indicates that the nothing which the saint awaits is relative, not absolute<sup>67</sup>—there is nothing of this world in it, that is all. Nirvana is the word he often uses (borrowing from the Buddhist vocabulary), which means an extinguishing; but this of itself is not decisive, for the will to live *is* extinguished in the saint, and with the will life sooner or later, and this is the sole positive reference and meaning of the term—but whether there may not be something else in man than the will to live, and whether there may not be some other state or condition than that which we call life, is wholly undetermined. Schopenhauer quotes what the Buddhists say: "Thou shalt attain Nirvana, that is, a state in which four things do not exist—birth, age, sickness, and death." That this state is a mere nothing is a presumptuous assertion. The case may be as with death in general, of which Schopenhauer said in substance that we know what we lose by it but not what we gain.<sup>68</sup> Our posi-

<sup>65</sup> After speaking of St. Bonaventura's *Vita S. Francisci* and Spence Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*, and remarking that they tell the same story, he says, "Auch sieht man, wie gleichgültig es ihr ist, ob sie von einer theistischen, oder einer atheistischen Religion ausgeht" (Werke, vol. ii, p. 454). Compare his comments on the Trappist order, as surviving revolutions, ecclesiastical changes, and unbelief, and preserving itself down to the present day in all its purity and awful (furchtbaren) severity (Werke, vol. ii, p. 467; vol. iii, p. 725).

<sup>66</sup> *Religionsphilosophie*, 2d ed., vol. i, p. 563.

<sup>67</sup> Werke, iii, pp. 222, 703, cf. 699.

<sup>68</sup> Werke, vol. vi, pp. 289-292.

tive knowledge is all of this world; and this, to the extent that the will to live, which is its principle, ceases, of course itself ceases. And we find Schopenhauer expressly agreeing with the Buddhists in their reticence as against the older Brahmans, who talked of reunion with Brahm. Nirvana to the Buddhists is simply the contrast of Sansara (or this world); when it is defined as nothing, that is only to say that the Sansara contains no single element that could serve for the definition or construction of Nirvana.<sup>69</sup> But though no knowledge, no faintest picture of Nirvana is possible, Schopenhauer again and again asserts it as a reality; he repeatedly implies this view of it, even where he does not directly assert it; and in a sense the faith in it may be called the crown, and really the basis, the final presupposition, of all his philosophy. In a way, comparison may be made to the unshakable confidence which he shared with Kant, that there is a reality behind phenomena, a *Ding an sich*—parting company as he thereby did with the whole idealistic or empirical school. He did, indeed, believe that he had discovered the real nature of the *Ding an sich*, holding that it was Will. But had he never reached a definite opinion, he would have held to a transcendent reality all the same. So, now that this will (as the will to live) is supposed to be itself extinguished, Schopenhauer holds that something remains other than the will to live, something that has never shown itself in this world, or only by hints and indirections, though, in the nature of the case, he can have only a negative idea of this “something,” as the contrary of the will and the world we know.

Let me quote some of his language. In speaking of one who has renounced the will, he says: “For that which he now is, conceptions fail us, yes, the data for conceptions. We can only call it, that which has the freedom either to be the will to live or not to be.”<sup>70</sup> The same idea is implied in his discussion of the ultimate freedom of the will: the will (which does not arise, it should be remembered, out of this world, but simply

<sup>69</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 698.

<sup>70</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 642. Volkelt, p. 367, happily says, “Ein und dasselbe Subjekt liegt dem sich bejahenden und dem sich verneinenden Willen zum Leben zu Grunde; und dieses Subjekt wird durch den Akt der Willensverneinung nicht vernichtet.”

appears here) might, he holds, have originally chosen not to appear and be here, or to be something essentially different from what it is—in which case the whole chain of its phenomenal manifestations might have been different.<sup>71</sup> That the will has mysterious depths beyond what appear on the surface is implied, I may add, in Schopenhauer's view of the way in which intellect is called up by it, made to serve it, only at last to be strange and contrary to it.<sup>72</sup> Again, the very fact that Schopenhauer calls it a fruitless question to ask, "What should I be, if I were not a will to live,"<sup>73</sup> is in a way conclusive, for if I am absolutely identical with my will to live (exhausted in it), the question is meaningless rather than fruitless. Moreover, the whole idea of an original fall, or aberration of the will (*Abfall*, *Abirrung*, *Verirrung*), which has been explained above, implies another type of existence from that of which we have experience—for how could there be a fall, save away from something, or how could there be an aberration, save as some straight and true path of being was presupposed?

To all this may be added more positive statements. Schopenhauer distinctly declares that in his philosophy the world (this world) does not fill out the whole possibility of being. Metaphysics, he says, is the knowledge that the order of nature is not the only and absolute order of things—and ethics is inseparable from this conviction. Particularly does he give praise to Kant for showing that the kingdom or realm of virtue is not of this world, though the reality of it is indubitable to him. When, he says, in witnessing tragedy we feel urged to turn away our will from life, to will it and love it no more, we become thereby aware that something else in us still remains, something of which we have no positive conception save that it is that which does not will life; and for this different kind of willing there must be

<sup>71</sup> Werke, vol. ii, pp. 338–339; in Werke, vol. iii, pp. 221–222, a perfectly clear statement is made that the will (that is, the will to live) is *not* "das Ding an sich schlechthin und absolut." In vol. iii, pp. 582–583, the "Keim" or "innerster Kern" of our being is distinctly contrasted with the will to live as we have it and with the character which it assumes; cf. Volkelt, pp. 190 ff.

<sup>72</sup> Schopenhauer calls the essential identity of the subject of knowing with the subject of willing "das Wunder κατ' ἐξοχήν" (Werke, vol. ii, p. 296); cf. my article on "Schopenhauer's Contact with Pragmatism," already referred to.

<sup>73</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 737.

a different corresponding kind of being—for if not, how could tragedy exercise its beneficent and elevating influence upon us? In this connection he uses phrases like “an entirely different existence,” “another world,” and speaks of life as “an oppressive dream out of which we have to awaken.”<sup>74</sup> He even dares to turn things round. All, he says, depends upon our standpoint. To those who are wholly immersed in the will to live, and who knowing no other will than this and no other world than that which it begets, what results from the mortification of this will, Nirvana, is indeed nothing. But if we turn our eyes on those who have mortified the will, whose translucent bodies only linger, and who calmly await even *their* disappearance, we have before us not nothing, nor vacancy, but a peace above all rational accounting, a calm like that of quiet seas, a rest, a confidence, a serenity, the mere reflection of which in the countenance, as Raphael and Correggio give it, is a gospel. Yes, “nothing” is relative, says Schopenhauer, and all depends on our standpoint. Nothing is the opposite of something; and if this world is our only something, then the negation of that world is nothing; but if the attitude in which we negate this world is to us the supreme something, then this world itself is nothing, and all its stars and milky ways do not save it from radical illusoriness—all, every bit of it, is manifestation of the will to live, and when that will goes, it goes, all goes.<sup>75</sup>

The state of Nirvana cannot be philosophically described, says Schopenhauer, only experienced, and the experience is individual, incommunicable. It goes by the names of ecstasy, rapture, illumination, union with God, and the like—in it subject

<sup>74</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 495; compare an extraordinarily daring statement as to the order of nature itself, in which, as he remarks, the lowest inorganic things live unattacked forever, while the most perfect, the living, with their infinitely complicated and inconceivably “kunstvolle” organizations, are continually appearing and disappearing: “Dies ist etwas so augenscheinlich Absurdes, dass es nimmermehr die wahre Ordnung der Dinge sein kann, vielmehr bloss eine Hülle, welche diese verbirgt, richtiger, ein durch die Beschaffenheit unseres Intellekts bedingtes Phänomen.”

<sup>75</sup> Werke, vol. ii, pp. 483–487; compare the comments on this close of Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, in vol. iii, p. 703; also vol. iii, p. 583, “Das Dasein, welches wir kennen, giebt er (der Resignierte) willig auf: was ihm statt dessen wird, ist in unsern Augen *nichts*; weil unser Dasein, auf jenes bezogen, *nichts* ist.”

and object are transcended;<sup>76</sup> it is a kind of immediate feeling—philosophy might be said to begin with such feeling and then finally to culminate in it, save that the last stage, ecstasy, is beyond all intellectual analysis or accounting.

Let me sum up, in closing, Schopenhauer's interpretation of the meaning of life. To some, pessimism means that life has no meaning. Not so to him. His thought is like this:—

This world is not arranged to make us happy, and happiness is not the aim of life. There is only one inborn error, Schopenhauer remarks with a touch of pathos, and that is that we are here to be happy.<sup>77</sup> Life should teach us a different lesson—the sufferings of life should teach us a different lesson. Yes, death should. Life is not a pleasure, but a task, in his eyes. We are here, strange as it may seem to those who have the superficial notions of Schopenhauer which most people, even scholars, have, and oddly as the language may sound as coming from a philosopher—we are here *to be saved*, rather than to have our natural wants and cravings gratified (that is, to be happy). We of this world are off the track, have wandered from the eternal order, and life is to bring us back. Therefore we appear, therefore we are set in space and time, that gradually, through our varied and successive actions and the course of our lives, we may come to find out what manner of being we are. Suffering, pain, disappointment, and the face of death are to keep us from forgetting ourselves—from thinking that we have some other aim in life than this sovereign one. Suffering, rightly taken, is a means of purification (*Läuterungsprozess*); pain and trouble work toward the true end of life, as with the sick man who takes a long and painful cure and knows that the pain is a part or a sign of his healing; the continuous deception and disappointment we experience are, as it were, intended to give us a sense of the nothingness of our ordinary strivings.<sup>78</sup> Yes, death itself comes

<sup>76</sup> Werke, vol. ii, p. 485.

<sup>77</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 729; Kant's great service to ethics, in the eyes of Schopenhauer, is that he purified it of all eudaemonism (vol. iv, "Die beiden Grundprobleme," p. 117); eudaemonists Schopenhauer classes along with the optimists, whom he contemns (vol. iii, p. 507).

<sup>78</sup> Compare Werke, vol. iii, p. 731 (vol. ii, p. 464); vol. iii, p. 658.

under a teleological aspect to Schopenhauer; not only is it a reminder<sup>79</sup> and a desert (yes, "desert," for, according to his logic, if we were what we ought to be, we could not die, Schopenhauer being at one, in bottom feeling, with Paul),<sup>80</sup> but for the good man it is release, too, and at the conclusion of his great essay on "Death and the Indestructibility of our Essential Being" Schopenhauer uses language that gives veritable consolation to any man who has struggled with himself and his faults and wondered whether they must be an enduring part of him, for he hints that with this solemn event, in which man parts with his recognizable individuality, he may also part with that he has struggled against, so that death may be a door to freedom. Yes, we may never know freedom till we die, and so, while peaceful and gentle, as a rule, is the death of every good man, something more than this, a willing dying, a glad dying, a joyful dying is the privilege of the saint. Perhaps it was with this in mind that Schopenhauer once said, "I believe that when death closes our eyes, we stand in a light of which our sunlight is only the shadow."<sup>81</sup>

We may call Schopenhauer a pessimist, if we will,—he spoke of himself in this way at times; but in the light of what I have been saying and quoting we shall hardly call him an absolute pessimist, since beyond the bounds of time and space, and as the last and eternal essence of things, he contemplates a state that is indeed hinted at in certain higher ranges of human experience, but of which one might say, in semi-Scriptural language, that eye hath

<sup>79</sup> Werke, vol. iii, p. 699. Death is spoken of as "die jedesmalige und unermüdlich wiederholte Anfrage der Natur an den Willen zum Leben: Hast du genug? Willst du aus mir hinaus?" The very shortness of life is a means to an end: "Damit sie [the just cited question] oft genug geschehe, ist das individuelle Leben so kurz."

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Werke, vol. iii, p. 581, "Der Tod sagt: Du bist das Produkt eines Aktes, der nicht hätte sein sollen; darum musst Du, ihn auszulöschen, sterben." Also, "Wir sind im Grunde etwas, das nicht sein sollte: darum hören wir auf zu sein." Cf. vol. iii, p. 652.

<sup>81</sup> Nachlass, vol. iv, p. 185 (§ 290). See Volkelt, p. 378, where this and other passages throwing light on Schopenhauer's views on this subject are quoted. The other references are: Werke (Grisebach ed.), vol. v, pp. 281 ff.; Nachlass, vol. iv, pp. 178, 190; Grisebach, Schopenhauer's Briefe, pp. 116, 185; Lindner-Frauenstädt, p. 526; Briefwechsel zwischen Schopenhauer und Becker (Leipzig, 1883), p. 66.



not seen it, nor ear heard it, neither hath the heart of man conceived it. If we call him pessimist, let us admit that he has more in common with those who condemned this world and looked for another some two thousand years ago in Palestine than with those who are ordinarily spoken of as pessimists today. Relatively a pessimist, absolutely and finally an optimist not altogether unlike Jesus, Paul, and Augustine—that is the way in which I should describe Schopenhauer.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Schopenhauer's faith appears perhaps most definitely in his latest works, the *Parerga und Paralipomena*. Here, to quote from Volkelt, p. 368, "Die Verneinung des Willens zum Leben eröffnet den Weg zu einem Reiche reinen, ruhenden, wandellosen, unbedürftigen Seins. Ja, er glaubt an ein 'gutes und lösendes Prinzip' in dieser Willenswelt, das 'zum Durchbruch kommen und das Ganze erfüllen und befreien kann.'" Volkelt cites *Werke* (Grisebach ed.), vol. ii, pp. 659, 229 f., vol. v, pp. 296, 224, Grisebach, Schopenhauer's *Briefe*, pp. 214 f., and refers to Richard Bottger's *Das Grundproblem der Schopenhauerischen Philosophie* (Greifswald, 1898), where, as he says, the last transcendent depths of the world of Schopenhauer are treated in an interesting manner.